UNNUMBERED LETTERS ISSUED FOR THE MONTH OF OCTOBER 2006

Dated	Subject	Distribution
10/2/06	Archived Issuances Available	S/D & N.O.O.
10/4/06	Hardcopies of the Code of Federal Regulations	S/D & N.O.O.
	Interest Rates for Water and Waste Disposal Loans, Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Loans, and Resource Conservation and Development Loans	S/D, RDM & AD
	Revised Supervisory Performance Element	N.O.O. & S/D
10/11/06	Business and Industry Guaranteed Loan Program Section 9006 Guaranteed Loan Program Community Programs Guaranteed Loan System Enhancements Training	S/D
10/11/06	Rural Development Website for Debarment/ Suspension	S/D
	Hiring Control	S/D
	Business and Industry Guaranteed Loan Program UPS Capital Corporation	S/D
10/13/06	Interest Rate Changes for Housing Programs and Credit Sales (Nonprogram)	S/D, RDM & A/D
10/16/06	Fiscal Year 2007 State Internal Review Handbook Updates	S/D
	New U.S. Department of Agriculture Identification Cards	S/D & N.O.O.

10/16/06	Administrative Leave for Voting	N.O.O & S/D
10/26/06	States Assessment of Homeowner Education Resources	S/D
10/31/06	Use of Sick Leave	N.O.O. & S/D

October 2, 2006

SUBJECT: Archived Issuances Available

TO: Rural Development State Directors
National Office Officials

ATTN: Administrative Program Directors

RD Instructions 2006-A, "National Directives," and 2006-B, "State Issuances," were revised in January 2006 to remove the requirement for State Offices to maintain a 5-Year Master Manual for all National Office directives. This requirement was originally instituted to provide the state with 5 years worth of information in case it might be needed for legal reasons. This manual was also necessary because there were no electronic versions of the files. This is no longer the case. Over the past several years, the Regulations and Paperwork Management Branch (RPMB), Support Services Division, has been automating the instructions, Administrative Notices, Procedure Notices, and the unnumbered letters. During this process, RPMB has developed an automated archive of the obsolete information, which can be found on the Intranet at http://teamrd.usda.gov/rd/regs_archive/index.html.

If you have any questions regarding the items posted to the Intranet or need older information that is not available electronically, please contact Jeanne Jacobs, Chief, RPMB, on 202-692-0040 or via e-mail at jeanne.jacobs@wdc.usda.gov.

(Signed by Sherie Hinton Henry)

SHERIE HINTON HENRY
Deputy Administrator
for Operations and Management

EXPIRATION DATE:
October 31, 2007

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
Administrative/Other Programs

Sent by electronic mail on 10/2/06 at 3:15pm by Support Services Division. State Directors and National Office Officials should advise other personnel as appropriate.

October 4, 2006

SUBJECT: Hardcopies of the Code of Federal Regulations

TO: Rural Development State Directors
National Office Officials

ATTN: Administrative Program Directors

The Government Printing Office (GPO) has automated all 50 titles of the CFR and has made them available online at their GPO Access website. Therefore, the Regulations and Paperwork Management Branch (RPMB) will no longer be providing hardcopies of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFRs). The entire collection of CFRs can be found at http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/index.html.

The website contains not only all 50 titles, but also a large majority of the titles have archives dating back to 1997. This website will also always have the current version available. The hardcopy versions were supplemented with updates that did not always arrive in a timely manner. By using the electronic version, you can always be assured that you have the current version. The electronic version also has all 50 titles on one page, so you can search whichever title you need. The files are available in a text version and an Adobe Acrobat version. There is also a search feature that should allow you to find what you are looking for in a quick and efficient manner.

If you have any questions regarding this issue, please contact Jeanne Jacobs, Chief, RPMB, on 202-692-0040 or via e-mail at jeanne.jacobs@wdc.usda.gov.

(Signed by Sherie Hinton Henry)

SHERIE HINTON HENRY
Deputy Administrator
For Operations and Management

EXPIRATION DATE:	FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
October 31, 2007	Administrative/Other Programs

Sent by electronic mail on 10/4/06 at 1:00 p.m. by SSD.
State Directors and National Office Officials should advise other personnel as appropriate.

October 4, 2006

SUBJECT: Interest Rates for Water and Waste Disposal
Loans, Watershed Protection and Flood
Prevention Loans, and Resource Conservation
and Development Loans

TO: Rural Development State Directors,
Rural Development Managers,
and Area Directors

Language in the continuing resolution for Fiscal Year 2007 requires the poverty rate remain at 4.5 percent. Therefore, the interest rates that were announced on September 19, 2006 are no longer valid. Following are the new interest rates for water and waste disposal loans:

Poverty Line...unchanged at......4.500%
Intermediate...decreased to....... 4.375%
Market......... decreased to..... .4.375%

These rates would be effective from October 1, 2006, through December 31, 2006, provided there is no new language prior to December 31st changing the manner in which rates are calculated.

Also, the rate for watershed protection and flood prevention loans and resource conservation and development loans is as follows:

CURRENT RATE	NEW RATE
4.500%	4.375%

EXPIRATION DATE:
December 31, 2006

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
Administrative/Other Programs

For this quarter, all loans may be obligated at the lower market rate. Please notify appropriate personnel of these rates.

(Signed by Curtis M. Anderson) for

JAMES M. ANDREW
Administrator
Utilities Programs

Sent by Electronic Mail on 10/5/06 at 9:30 a.m. by PAD.

October 4, 2006

SUBJECT: Revised Supervisory Performance Element

TO: National Office Officials
Rural Development State Directors

ATTN: Administrative Program Directors
Human Resources Managers

With the new accountability initiatives for Human Capital, supervisors will play a vital role in meeting performance requirements. In Fiscal Year 2007, the supervisory element for rating officials has been revised to hold supervisors more accountable for demonstrating alignment of organizational goals and focus on achieving measurable results.

Currently, the supervisory element is mandatory for supervisors at the GS-13 grade level and above. With this revision, in Fiscal Year 2007, **ALL** supervisors' performance plans will be required to have a mandatory supervisory element.

A second paragraph has been added that holds supervisors accountable for issuing subordinate performance plans in a timely manner, and assuring that at least one performance review is done within a rating period. All rating officials will be held responsible for assuring their subordinate's performance plans provide a clear link to the Rural Development Strategic Plan and that there is discernible cascading of mission goals down to the work unit level.

Attached is an updated copy of RD Instruction 2060-A, "Performance Ratings," Exhibit B, Page 1. The Performance Appraisal Handbook can be found at http://teamrd.usda.gov/rd/DAOM/AAHR/PDF/PerformanceTrainingManual.pdf. They have been updated to show the new supervisory element. For offices using I*Cams, the supervisory element will not be updated in time for you to issue your new plans. You will have to manually add the second paragraph to the standard.

EXPIRATION DATE:
September 30, 2007

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
Administrative/Other Programs

If you have any questions regarding this memorandum, please call Norma Valdes, Human Resources Specialist, at (202) 692-0198, or via e-mail to norma.valdes@wdc.usda.gov.

(Signed by Sherie Hinton Henry)

SHERIE HINTON HENRY
Deputy Administrator
for Operations and Management

Attachment

Sent by electronic mail on 10/06/06 at 12:00 pm by Human Resources.
State Directors and National Office Officials should advise other personnel as appropriate.

October 11, 2006

SUBJECT: Business and Industry Guaranteed Loan Program
Section 9006 Guaranteed Loan Program
Community Programs
Guaranteed Loan System Enhancements Training

TO: State Directors, Rural Development

ATTN: Business Programs Directors
Community Programs Directors

This memorandum is to announce training scheduled for October 25, 2006, which will address a number of recently completed enhancements to the Guaranteed Loan System (GLS). The Rural Development St. Louis Office and National Office have created a web-based process for payment of annual renewal fees and reporting of semi-annual loan status. The process involves the eAuthentication of lender representatives for Level II access. The training will address these and other GLS system enhancements. Participants should include Program Directors, Loan Specialists, and Loan Technicians.

I. Teleconference Information: See Attachment A for State participation

Date:	October 25, 2006
East:	9 am to 11 am (EST)
Leader Name:	Diane Berger
Telephone Number:	1-800-779-8419
Conference Number:	PG4711369
Passcode:	2845892
West:	2 pm to 4 pm (EST)
Leader Name:	Diane Berger
Telephone Number:	1-800-779-8419
Conference Number:	PG4711401
Passcode	2845892

EXPIRATION DATE:
October 31, 2007

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
Community/Business Programs

We will be using the My Meeting Web site to conduct the presentation. Participants will be able to join the My Meeting conference at the following Web site: https://www.mymeetings.com/nc/join/

Once you have accessed the My Meetings webpage, you will be required to enter the conference number, passcode, your first name, last name, email address, and company. Participants will be required to read and agree to the Conferencing Privacy Policy, and click on proceed.

In addition to joining the Web site, participants will call the telephone number identified above, and enter the passcode to hear the presentation. For security reasons, the leader name and passcode will be required to join your call.

Each State Office will have a total of six conference lines for Business Programs and Community Programs staff. The allocation of the lines is at the discretion of the State Office.

II. Training Areas will consist of the following:

1. eAuthentication Process – registration and access for lenders.
2. Local Registration Authority (LRA) – Training course, LRA list.
3. Lender Interactive Network Connection – LINC.
4. Lender Status Reports – semi-annual and default status.
5. Annual Renewal Fee – billing, payment, and tracking.
6. Automated Clearing House Process for payment of annual renewal fee.
7. Loan Closings – For lenders.
8. Disaster Screens – Presidential Declared.
9. Debt Collection Improvement Act (DCIA) – Referral to Department of Treasury.
10. Other enhancements, questions, etc.

III. Local Registration Authority (LRA)

The LRA training program consists of online course materials, followed by an interactive segment that gives the employee a closer look at the application and tests the trainee's knowledge. Upon successful completion of the interactive segment, the eAuthentication Help Desk will give the employee access to the eAuthentication Registration Administration application. This will allow the LRA to authenticate lender employees, based on their identification and completion of the eAuthentication process. The training should take less than 1 hour to complete.

After completing the training course, it will take approximately 1 week to process your LRA authorization. We encourage States to complete the training prior to October 25, 2006, which will expedite the lender eAuthentication process after the teleconference.

Please Note the Following:

1. The interactive scenario segment of the LRA training requires Microsoft Internet Explorer 5.05 or above. Netscape will not work.
2. Monitor display resolution settings of 1024 x 768 are also recommended for optimal viewing.

To access the training, you will need to forward a request to Tom Dickson, National Office, Program Support Staff, at thomas.dickson@wdc.usda.gov. The request must include your first and last name, note LRA training and access to the training Web site. It will take approximately 1 to 2 business days to process the request. Trainees will receive an e-mail notification. Once you are added to the Web site, you may access the training course as follows:

1. Go to the eAuthentication Web site at: http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov/
2. Click on "Local Registration Authority Login"
3. Click on "Click this link to take LRA Training Course Online"
4. Click on Continue
5. Input your eAuth User ID and Password and Click Login
6. Click on "Online LRA Training Course"

IV. Training Material

The National Office will place the following training material on the Business and Cooperative Programs intranet Web site:

1. A sample lender letter which details the annual renewal fee process.
2. User Guide can be used for reference and distribution to the lenders.
3. The training material presented during the teleconference.
4. List of LRA representatives for Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service, Rural Development, and other Agencies. LRAs identified can assist the Agency and lenders with the personal presentation of government issued identification.
5. An excel spreadsheet which lists the lenders shared with the FSA. We suggest you work with FSA and the lender to avoid duplication of the eAuthentication process.
6. An Application Authorization Security Management list that identifies the lender employees who currently have eAuthentication Level II access for identified programs.

7. Agreement for Electronic Transactions.
8. Security Administrator's request to expand program access.

Access to the Web site can be obtained at: http://teamrd.usda.gov/rd/rbs/training/gls.htm

Community Programs can also access this Web site. The information will be placed on the Web site close of business October 20, 2006.

If you have any questions, please contact Diane Berger, Loan Specialist, 202-260-1508, diane.berger@wdc.usda.gov or William Smith, Loan Specialist, 202-205-0903, william.smith@wdc.usda.gov, or Andrea Barnett, Loan Specialist, 202-720-0487, andrea.barnett@wdc.usda.gov.

(Signed by Carolyn Parker) for

WILLIAM F. HAGY III
Deputy Administrator
Business Programs

(Signed by Chad Parker) for

JAMES C. ALSOP
Deputy Administrator
Community Programs

Attachment

Sent by electronic mail on 10/11/2006 at 2:15 P.M. by DABP
State Directors will notify personnel as appropriate.

Attachment A

East	**West**
▪ Maine	▪ Missouri
▪ Vermont/New Hampshire	▪ Arkansas
▪ Massachusetts/Connecticut/Rhode Island	▪ Minnesota
▪ New York	▪ Nebraska
▪ New Jersey	▪ North Dakota
▪ Pennsylvania	▪ South Dakota
▪ Maryland/Delaware	▪ Iowa
▪ Virginia	▪ Kansas
▪ West Virginia	▪ Louisiana
▪ Kentucky	▪ Oklahoma
▪ North Carolina	▪ Texas
▪ South Carolina	▪ Washington
▪ Tennessee	▪ Oregon
▪ Georgia	▪ Idaho
▪ Florida/Virgin Islands	▪ Montana
▪ Alabama	▪ Wyoming
▪ Puerto Rico	▪ Alaska
▪ Mississippi	▪ California
▪ Michigan	▪ Nevada
▪ Ohio	▪ Utah
▪ Indiana	▪ Arizona
▪ Illinois	▪ Colorado
▪ Wisconsin	▪ New Mexico
	▪ Hawaii

October 11, 2006

TO: State Directors
Rural Development

ATTENTION: Program Directors

FROM: Russell T. Davis ***(Signed by Peter Morgan) for***
Administrator
Housing and Community Facilities Programs

SUBJECT: Rural Development Website for Debarment/Suspension

We created a website for debarment/suspension information on the Rural Development intranet. It is located at: http://teamrd.usda.gov/rd/rhs/PSS/Debarment/debarment.htm, and is among the Program Support Staff links on the Housing and Community Facilities Intranet page.

This website contains information on requirements for screening applicants, contractors, and other potential clients associated with loan making activities. It includes a link to the General Services Administration website for determining whether an individual or organization is excluded from receiving federal financial assistance. The website also contains links to regulations governing debarment/suspension activities.

Please advise your staff of this new tool which can facilitate your loan making operations. Anyone with comments or suggestions to improve the website should contact Tom Dickson, Rural Development Debarment/Suspension Coordinator at (202) 690-4492, or Thomas.Dickson@wdc.usda.gov.

EXPIRATION DATE:
October 31, 2007

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
Administrative/Other Programs

Sent by electronic mail on <u>10/10/06</u> at <u>10:45 am</u> by PSS. State Directors should notify other personnel as appropriate.

October 11, 2006

SUBJECT: Hiring Controls

TO: Rural Development State Directors

ATTN: Administrative Program Directors
Human Resources Managers

This memorandum is a follow up to the September 19, 2006 memorandum regarding Frequently Asked Questions on Hiring Controls.

Question three in the Frequently Asked Question addressed the hiring of temporary appointments. Temporary appointments can be used with more flexibility than permanent appointments. The Code of Federal Regulations, Title 5, Subpart D, section 316.401 (c) (1), states that temporary appointments have a not to exceed date of one-year, and the possibility of an extension for one additional year.

Temporary appointments can be made to fill short-term positions that meet employment needs that will be terminated within a short timeframe. Since Rural Development does not have Direct Hire authority for temporary positions, the appointments should be made through competitive appointments for either full-time or part-time positions. The vacancy announcement should state that the agency has the option of extending a temporary appointment up to one-year, and the appointment could be terminated at any time if the need of the agency no longer exists.

When filling temporary positions, the supervisor should certify that the employment need is truly temporary; the reason for making the appointment; and that the appointment meets the above regulatory limits. This can be done through either a memorandum or a local form can be developed that will remain with the file.

EXPIRATION DATE:
October 31, 2007

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
Administrative/Other Programs

A position cannot be filled as a temporary appointment if it has been filled by an earlier temporary appointment within the last two-year cumulative period of time, in the preceding three-year period.

The hiring of temporary part-time employees will allow you to maintain fiscal flexibility while we are on a Continuing Resolution for fiscal year 2007. Hiring controls will not be required for these positions, but the national office will be monitoring the use of these appointments.

If you have any questions regarding this memorandum, please contact your servicing Human Resources office or Norma Valdes, Human Resources Specialist, on (202) 692-0198, or via e-mail at norma.valdes@wdc.usda.gov.

(Signed by Sherie Hinton Henry)

SHERIE HINTON HENRY
Deputy Administrator
for Operations and Management

Sent by electronic mail on October 12, 2006 at 7:15am by Human Resources.
State Directors should notify other personnel as appropriate.

October 11, 2006

SUBJECT: Business and Industry Guaranteed Loan Program
UPS Capital Corporation

TO: State Directors, Rural Development

ATTN: Business Program Directors

UPS Capital Corporation Lending Operation, UPS Business Credit (UPS) is one of the largest lenders in the Business and Industry (B&I) Guaranteed Loan Program. Effective October 10, 2006, UPS will relocate its corporate headquarters. UPS focuses on delivering financial services to small, middle market, and international companies. UPS offers a number of government-guaranteed loan options for customers, and their lending products can be used for everything from real estate to franchise financing to business acquisitions.

We have attached a key contact list for UPS for your convenience. In addition, listed below are their corporate headquarters information:

UPS Capital Corporation
35 Glenlake Parkway, NE, Suite 500
Atlanta, Georgia 30328
(404) 828-4740 – telephone
(404) 828-3710 – fax
Hours of Operations: 8AM-7PM EST

Domestic U.S. Lending
UPS Capital Business Credit
425 Day Hill Road
Windsor, Connecticut 06095

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 400
Windsor, Connecticut 06095
Main Office: (860) 687-2600
Hours of Operation: 8AM-5PM EST

EXPIRATION DATE:
October 31, 2007

FILING INSTRUCTION:
Community/Business Programs

UPS has made a corporate decision to electronically file or incorporate paperless servicing file system. This includes B&I guaranteed loans. RD Instruction 4287-B, section 4287.107(c) states, "At the Agency's request, the lender will meet with the Agency to ascertain how guaranteed loan is being serviced and that the conditions and covenants of the Loan Agreement are being enforced. The Agency will hold meetings with the lender at least annually. . . ."

UPS has agreed to provide their entire B&I loan docket file to the Agency on a compact disk. To review a B&I loan docket, you should request the B&I loan docket file on compact disk at least 30 days prior to the scheduled annual lender visit.

You should bring up any issues of concern during the scheduled annual lender visit and follow-up in writing with the lender on issues and concerns.

If we can provide you with information, please contact the B&I Loan Servicing Branch at (202) 690-4103.

(Signed by John H. Wells) for

JACKIE J. GLEASON
Administrator
Business and Cooperative Programs

Attachment

UPS CAPITAL BUSINESS CREDIT

Key Contact List

Name	Phone Number	Fax Number	E-Mail Address
David Etter, President	860-687-2651	860-687-2647	detter@ups.com
Mary Weaver, Assistant	860-687-2705	860-687-2647	mweaver@ups.com
Portfolio Management			
James Seichter	860-687-2706	860-687-2703	jseichter@ups.com
Timothy Broderick	860-687-2640	860-687-2703	tbroderick@ups.com
Workout			
Chris Ursini	860-687-2754	860-687-2653	cursini@ups.com
Loan Servicing			
Cindy Bradley	860-687-2624	860-278-3205	cdbradley@ups.com
Linda Kiraly	860-687-2712	860-687-2772	lkiraly@ups.com
Underwriting Support Mgr.			
Beth Donald	860-687-2779	860-687-2771	bdonald@ups.com
Controller			
Phil Mucha	860-687-2680	860-687-2726	pmucha@ups.com

October 13, 2006

SUBJECT: Interest Rate Changes for Housing Programs and Credit Sales (Nonprogram)

TO: Rural Development State Directors, Rural Development Managers, and Area Directors

ATTN: Rural Housing Program Director

The following interest rates, effective November 1, 2006, are changed as follows:

Loan Type	Existing Rate	New Rate
ALL LOAN TYPES		
Treasury Judgement Rate	5.070%	4.900%

The new rate shown above is as of the week ending September 29, 2006. The actual judgement rate that will be used will be the rate for the calendar week preceding the date the defendant becomes liable for interest. This rate may be found by going to the Federal Reserve web site for the weekly average 1-year Constant Maturity Treasury yield (http://www.federalreserve.gov/releases/h15/data/Weekly_Friday_/H15_TCMNOM_Y1.txt).

RURAL HOUSING LOANS

Loan Type	Existing Rate	New Rate
Rural Housing (RH) 502 Low or Moderate	6.250	6.000

EXPIRATION DATE: November 30, 2006

FILING INSTRUCTIONS: Administrative/Other Programs

Single Family Housing (SFH) Nonprogram	6.750	6.500
Rural Housing Site (RH-524), Non-Self-Help	6.250	6.000
Rural Rental Housing and Rural Cooperative Housing	6.250	6.000

Please notify appropriate personnel of these rates.

(Signed by Peter Morgan)for

RUSSELL T. DAVIS
Administrator
Housing & Community Facilities Programs

Sent by Electronic Mail on 10/16/06 at 9:05 a.m. by PAD.

October 16, 2006

SUBJECT: Fiscal Year 2007 State Internal Review Handbook Updates

TO: Rural Development State Directors

ATTN: Administrative Program Directors and Management Control Officers

The Financial Management Division (FMD) has been working closely with the Information Resources Management (IRM) staffs in the National Office and the St. Louis Office to update and issue the Fiscal Year (FY) 2007 State Internal Review (SIR) Handbook review guides and corresponding spreadsheets for calculating compliance scores.

The updated SIR Handbook has been tested and certified by the IRM staff in St. Louis. In addition to the testing and certification, the IRM staff in St. Louis has loaded the updated handbook on the Intranet at https://sir.sc.egov.usda.gov. The Management Control Officers (MCOs) were notified by e-mail on October 2, 2006, of this update and availability for downloading from the Intranet. The MCOs should ensure they obtain the latest updates to the SIR Handbook.

The value of loans/grants reviewed and the loans/grants with deficiencies will continue to be documented and reported on the "Summary of Review Findings," at the SIR exit conferences, and in all final SIR reports. Beginning with the FY 2007 SIRs, weaknesses that are recurring from the previous SIR(s) of that office must be documented and reported on the "Summary of Review Findings." This information must also be reported at the SIR exit conference and in the final SIR report.

The universe data on total subject reviewed (i.e., employees, files, offices, etc.) and those with deficiency findings will still need to be captured and reported in the Automated Reports Tracking System.

EXPIRATION DATE:
September 30, 2007

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
Administrative/Other Programs

If you have any questions, or need additional information, please contact Diana Wareham of FMD, at (202) 692-0044.

(Signed by Sherie Hinton Henry)

SHERIE HINTON HENRY
Deputy Administrator
for Operations and Management

Sent by electronic mail on 10/17/06 at 02:30 p.m. by FMD.
The State Director should advise other personnel as appropriate.

October 16, 2006

SUBJECT: New U.S. Department of Agriculture Identification Cards

TO: Rural Development State Directors
National Office Officials

ATTN: Administrative Program Directors

The following is the latest information from the Department on Homeland Security Presidential Directive 12 (HSPD-12) for the establishment of a common identification standard for all Federal employees and contractors as directed by the President.

The new common identification (ID) card for the Federal Government will be rolled out in phases. Initial production of the new ID card begins in late October 2006 in Washington, DC; Atlanta, Georgia; New York, New York; and Seattle, Washington. Cards will be produced by a shared service provider under contract to the General Services Administration. A large-scale roll out begins in January 2007. It will take approximately 2 years for the new ID card to reach everyone in the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

USDA is naming its card the "Lincpass," in honor of President Abraham Lincoln, founder of the Department of Agriculture. The new ID card contains robust security features, is tightly controlled, is resistant to fraudulent reproduction, will be recognized across the Federal Government, and requires a stringent process for issuance. Rigorous Federal Government standards have been developed to describe what the card looks like, what personal information it contains, and how it will be used.

Initially, the card will be used for visual identification. In the future, you will be able to use the cards electronically to gain access to Federal buildings and computer systems.

EXPIRATION DATE:
October 31, 2007

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
Administrative/Other Programs

For more information visit http://lincpass.usda.gov. Then use your eAuthentication login account and password (same as the account used for accessing AgLearn) to access the full details regarding implementation of HSPD-12 at USDA.

(Signed by Sherie Hinton Henry)

SHERIE HINTON HENRY
Deputy Administrator
  for Operations and Management

Sent by electronic mail on 10/17/06 at 2:00 p.m. by PAS.
State Directors and National Office Officials should notify other personnel as appropriate.

October 16, 3006

SUBJECT: Administrative Leave for Voting

TO: National Office Officials
Rural Development State Directors

ATTN: Administrative Program Directors

Elections will be held on **Tuesday, November 7, 2006**.

This is a reminder that RD Instruction 2066-A, Section 2066.12(c), provides that employees may be excused to permit them to report for work three hours after the polls open, or to leave work three hours before the polls close, *whichever results in the lesser amount of time absent from duty.*

However, please be advised that this does not mean that employees are automatically entitled to three hours of official leave, in which they can choose either to come to work late or to leave early. What this does mean is that managers and supervisors will need to make a determination if the lesser amount of time spent from duty for their employees will be in the morning or in the afternoon. An entitlement to official time off may not exist based on the employee's work schedule.

The attached information is provided as a guide to assist managers and supervisors in making these determinations. Employees may not change their tour of duty or anticipated arrival time on election day in order to get administrative leave to vote. Please note that under certain circumstances, employees will not be entitled to any official time off. Please, also note that leave is chargeable in quarter-hour increments for some employees and half-hour increments for others. Specific examples of 8, 9, and 10 hour work schedules and corresponding official time off are provided in the following guide.

EXPIRATION DATE:
December 31, 2006

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
Administrative/Other Programs

Here is a step-by-step approach to making administrative leave determinations:

Step 1. Identify the employee's work schedule.
Step 2. Identify the voting hours at the employee's polling location.
Step 3. Determine how long the polls are open before and after the employee's scheduled work hours.
Step 4. If the polls are open 3 hours before OR after the employee's regular work hours, you will not approve administrative leave to vote.
Step 5. If the polls are not open at least 3 hours before OR after the employee's regular work hours, identify the shortfall between the poll hours and the employee's work schedule in the morning and the afternoon.
Step 6. Approve administrative leave for the lesser amount of time off under Step 5.

Employees must request voting leave in advance either orally or in writing.
Time and Attendance sheets should be coded **66**, Administrative Leave.

If you have any questions concerning this issue, please contact your servicing personnel office.

(signed by Sherie Hinton Henry)

SHERIE HINTON HENRY
Deputy Administrator
  for Operations and Management

Attachments

Sent by electronic mail on October 18, 2006 at 12:45pm by Human Resources.
State Directors and National Office Officials should notify other personnel as appropriate.

Attachment 1

(Leave charged in quarter-hour increments)

Polls open from 7:00 am to 8:00 pm

Work Schedule	Time Off	Departure/Arrival
6:30 am to 5:00 pm	None	
7:15 am to 4:45 pm	None	
7:30 am to 5:00 pm	None	
7:30 am to 6:00 pm	1 hour pm	5:00 pm
7:45 am to 5:15 pm	1/4 hour pm	5:00 pm
8:00 am to 5:30 pm	1/2 hour pm	5:00 pm
8:15 am to 5:45 pm	3/4 hour pm	5:00 pm
8:30 am to 5:00 pm	None	
8:45 am to 5:15 pm	1/4 hour pm	5:00 pm
9:00 am to 5:30 pm	1/2 hour pm	5:00 pm

Polls open from 6:00 am to 7:00 pm

Work Schedule	Time Off	Departure/Arrival
7:00 am to 3:30 pm	None	
7:15 am to 3:45 pm	None	
7:15 am to 4:45 pm	3/4 hour pm	4:00 pm
7:30 am to 4:00 pm	None	
7:30 am to 6:00 pm	1 1/2 hours am	9:00 am
7:45 am to 4:15 pm	1/4 hour pm	4:00 pm
8:00 am to 4:30 pm	1/2 hour pm	4:00 pm
8:15 am to 4:45 pm	3/4 hour am/pm	9:00 am/4:00 pm
8:15 am to 5:45 pm	3/4 hour am	9:00 am
8:30 am to 5:00 pm	1/2 hour am	9:00 am
8:45 am to 5:15 pm	1/4 hour am	9:00 am
9:00 am to 5:30 pm	None	

Attachment 2

(Leave charged in half-hour increments)

Polls open from 7:00 am to 8:00 pm

Work Schedule	Time Off	Departure/Arrival
6:30 am to 5:00 pm	None	
7:15 am to 4:45 pm	None	
7:30 am to 5:00 pm	None	
7:30 am to 6:00 pm	1 hour pm	5:00 pm
8:00 am to 5:30 pm	1/2 hour pm	5:00 pm
8:15 am to 5:45 pm	1 hour pm	4:45 pm
8:30 am to 5:00 pm	None	
9:00 am to 5:30 pm	1/2 hour pm	5:00 pm

Polls open from 6:00 am to 7:00 pm

Work Schedule	Time Off	Departure/Arrival
7:00 am to 3:30 pm	None	
7:00 am to 4:30 pm	1/2 hour pm	4:00 pm
7:15 am to 3:45 pm	None	
7:30 am to 4:00 pm	None	
7:30 am to 5:00 pm	1 hour pm	4:00 pm
7:30 am to 6:00 pm	1 1/2 hours am	9:00 am
8:00 am to 4:30 pm	1/2 hour pm	4:00 pm
8:00 am to 5:30 pm	1 hour am	9:00 am
8:30 am to 5:00 pm	1/2 hour am	9:00 am
9:00 am to 5:30 pm	None	

October 26, 2006

TO: State Directors

ATTENTION: Rural Housing Program Directors

FROM: Russell T. Davis ***(Signed by Russell T. Davis)***
Administrator
Housing and Community Facilities Programs

SUBJECT: States Assessment of Homeowner Education Resources

It is anticipated that the final rule requiring first time homebuyers to complete homeowner education will be published in the near future. With the publication of the final rule, the Agency will require that applicants who are first time home-buyers complete homeowner education training prior to loan closing. The goal of this requirement is to have first time home-buyers financed under the Section 502 Direct program be well prepared for homeownership by assuring that they are informed and educated about the homeownership process and the responsibilities that come with homeownership.

In preparation for the implementation of the homeowner education requirement, an assessment of homeowner education resources within each state is necessary. Therefore, State Directors are asked to conduct assessments of the availability of certified homeowner education in their respective states and to maintain and update at least annually a listing of providers and the cost to the trainee, if any. The final rule will state that the annually updated list of approved housing counseling providers will be published as an annual State supplement to HB 3550-1. States that have Cooperative Extension Services that provide homeowner education should be included on the State list of providers.

EXPIRATION DATE:
October 30, 2007

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
Housing Programs

Factors that should be taken into consideration regarding availability of homeowner education to borrowers in areas served by field offices include: distance, travel time, geographic obstacles and cost. Where there is a fee charged to the borrower for homeowner education, the States will also assess sources of funding for the borrower to access to pay for their homeowner education.

The States should identify homeowner education courses that are free of charge or have nominal fees, (less than fifty dollars ($50.00)), as it will be indicated in the final rule that borrowers will be first referred to no fee or nominal fee classes or one-on-one counseling in all states. This is not intended to set an Agency recommended fee level rather it recognizes that some providers must charge a fee for materials or related expenses.

Each State Director should do an area by area assessment of the availability of homeowner education to determine if it is available in any form, including telephone counseling of at least four hours duration delivered by a certified trainer. It will be necessary to determine availability of homeowner education resources before the final rule becomes effective as field offices will be expected to provide a list of homeowner education providers to applicants and availability of homeowner education will be a primary factor before consideration will be given to exception requests on a case by case basis by the State Director.

In researching acceptable forms of homeownership education, criteria to be considered are whether there is a certificate of completion process or other documentation of completion issued by the provider and the homeowner education must be provided by homeownership education counselors that are certified by any of the following: (1) the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD); (2) NeighborWorks America (NWA); (3) the National Federation of Housing Counselors (NFHC); 5) National American Indian Housing Council (NAIHC); or (4) the State Housing Finance Agency or other qualified state organization approved by the State Director. In addition, the State Director may include homeowner education provided by the Cooperative Extension Service.

Upon completion of the course, trainees will be expected to be knowledgeable in the following areas:

(1) Preparing for Homeownership (evaluate readiness to go from rental to homeownership)
(2) Budgeting (Pre- and Post-Purchase)
(3) Credit Counseling
(4) Shopping for a home
(5) Lender Differences (predatory lending)
(6) Obtaining a mortgage (mortgage process, different types of mortgages)
(7) Loan closing (closing process, documentation, closing costs)
(8) Post-occupancy counseling (delinquency and foreclosure prevention)

(9) Life as a homeowner (homeowner warranties, maintenance and repairs)

We are anticipating publication of the Final Rule in time for a January 1, 2007 effective date. Once the rule is published, States should have completed their assessments and submit a State Issuance for prior approval in accordance with RD Instruction 2006-B that addresses implementation of this requirement in the State. The issuance will include a list of approved providers.

The following websites are provided for reference to assist in the assessment of homeowner education but are not considered to be an exhaustive list:

NeighborWorks America: www.nw.org
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development: www.hud.org
HUD approved housing counseling agencies:
http://www.hud.gov/offices/hsg/sfh/hcc/hcs.cfm
National American Indian Housing Council: www.naihc.net

Other sources of available information may include RD Section 525 Technical & Supervisory Assistance Program grantees, the Federal Home Loan Banks, State Housing Agencies, State Universities and other entities servicing your area.

If you have any questions regarding this memorandum, please contact Janet Carter of the Single Family Housing Direct Loan Division at (202) 720-1489.

October 31, 2006

SUBJECT: Use of Sick Leave

TO: National Office Officials
Rural Development State Directors

ATTN: Administrative Program Directors
Human Resources Managers

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is in the process of issuing final regulations for changes in the use of sick leave. This change in the sick leave regulation is being issued as part of OPM's effort to standardize leave policies and provide agencies with guidance on leave programs available to assist employees in the event of pandemic health crisis.

Rural Development is implementing the following changes for all non-bargaining unit employees immediately. Where employees are represented by labor organizations, it will be necessary for the agency to satisfy its collective bargaining obligations before implementing these changes for impacted bargaining unit employees.

The final regulations remove the requirement for an employee to maintain a minimum sick leave balance of eighty hours in order to use the maximum amount of sick leave available for family care and bereavement, which is up to thirteen days for general medical care of a family member or bereavement, or up to twelve weeks for a serious health condition of a family member.

Please notify your timekeepers of this change. Since employees will still have a ceiling of thirteen workdays of sick leave that can be used for general family care or bereavement purposes, and twelve workweeks of sick leave to provide care for a family member with a serious health condition, timekeepers will need to maintain records sufficient to ensure employees do not exceed their entitlements, but no longer have to verify the eighty hour balance for the employee.

EXPIRATION DATE:
October 31, 2007

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
Administrative/Other Programs

A new section to the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) has been added. CFR, Title 5, Subpart D, section 630.401 (f), was added to clarify the use of advanced sick leave. It states, "An agency can only advance a maximum of thirty days of sick leave when required by the exigencies of the situation for serious disability or ailment of the employee or a family member or for purposes related to the adoption of a child." Before this change, only forty hours of sick leave could be advanced for care of a family member.

The final regulations also revises, CFR, Title 5, Subpart D, Section 630.403 (b), to be consistent with the medical certification requirements found under the Family and Medical Leave Act, establishing a standardized time period of fifteen calendar days within which an employee must provide administratively acceptable evidence as to the reason for his/her use of sick leave, and provides for a period of up to thirty calendar days if it is not possible for the employee to obtain the requested certification despite his/her good faith efforts.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact Norma Valdes at (202) 692-0198 or via e-mail at norma.valdes@wdc.usda.gov.

(Signed by Sherie Hinton Henry)

SHERIE HINTON HENRY
Deputy Administrator
for Operations and Management

Sent by electronic mail on November 1, 2006 at 2:30pm by Human Resources.
State Directors and National Office Officials should advise other personnel as appropriate.